

Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, ranking members Kissel and Fishbein and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Haley Zawilinski, I am from Waterford, CT and am a supporter of CT Against Gun Violence. I am a senior at the University of Connecticut and a member of the CT Against Gun Violence Youth Council.

I am testifying in favor of HB-6355, An Act Concerning Risk Protection Orders.

When I was learning how to drive, my father turned to me and said “treat this vehicle as if it is a loaded shotgun, both have the power to kill yourself or others in a moment’s notice so YOU need to be reasonable. Every time I get behind the wheel, I am reminded that my choices and actions have the potential to take innocent lives and it is on me to help keep those around me safe. To have a gun, an individual takes on an incredible responsibility because one shot can have the potential to end a life and create a ripple effect of collateral damages. I am not challenging the constitutional right to bear arms; I am asking you to consider the responsibility that accompanies owning a firearm.

While we are respecting the interests of one population (in this case gun owners) we cannot neglect the interests of the population that feels as though their lives (or other lives) are at risk. We cannot cherry pick the populations we choose to protect and serve. It is time to listen to our citizens, hear their concerns, and take measurable actions to resolve conflicts.

I ask that you favorable report HB-6355 out of committee so that the General Assembly can vote to strengthen our Extreme Risk Protection law so that it works harder to prevent firearm suicide and homicide. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Haley Zawilinski

Waterford, CT